

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS

Vol. XXI

July, 1928

No. 3



The seal of the Town of Jamestown, R. I., dating from colonial days. The device is a shield bearing a sheep, significant of the importance of the sheep-raising industry. Outside the shield is the inscription JAMESTOWN. The town will celebrate its 250th anniversary later this year.

Issued Quarterly

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RHODE
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CLAUDE R. BRANCH, President
HOWARD W. PRESTON, Secretary

GILBERT A. HARRINGTON, Treasurer
HOWARD M. CHAPIN, Librarian

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or the opinions of contributors.

Joseph Perkins, Silversmith

By WILLIAM DAVIS MILLER

Joseph Perkins, merchant, gunsmith and silversmith of Little Rest, Rhode Island, the son of Edward and Elizabeth (Brenton) Perkins, and great-grandson of Governor William Brenton, one of the original Pettquamscut Purchasers, was born in the township of South Kingstown on September 24, 1749¹. From that important date until 1770, when there is evidence that he was engaged in his trade, nothing regarding his early life, education and apprenticeship is known, despite the fact that a considerable collection of his papers, including two of his day books and a ledger, were carefully preserved by Elisha Reynolds Potter, Senior.

On the 25th of April, 1774, styling himself as "Goldsmith," Perkins purchased, for the sum of "Twenty & Five Spanish Silver Mill'd Dollars," a small lot of land from Robert Potter, situated on the north side of the highway running through the village of Little Rest and next on the east to the old Reynolds Tavern². From the papers referred to it appears that within a year's time he had commenced to build his house* on this piece of land and it is of interest to note some of the expenses

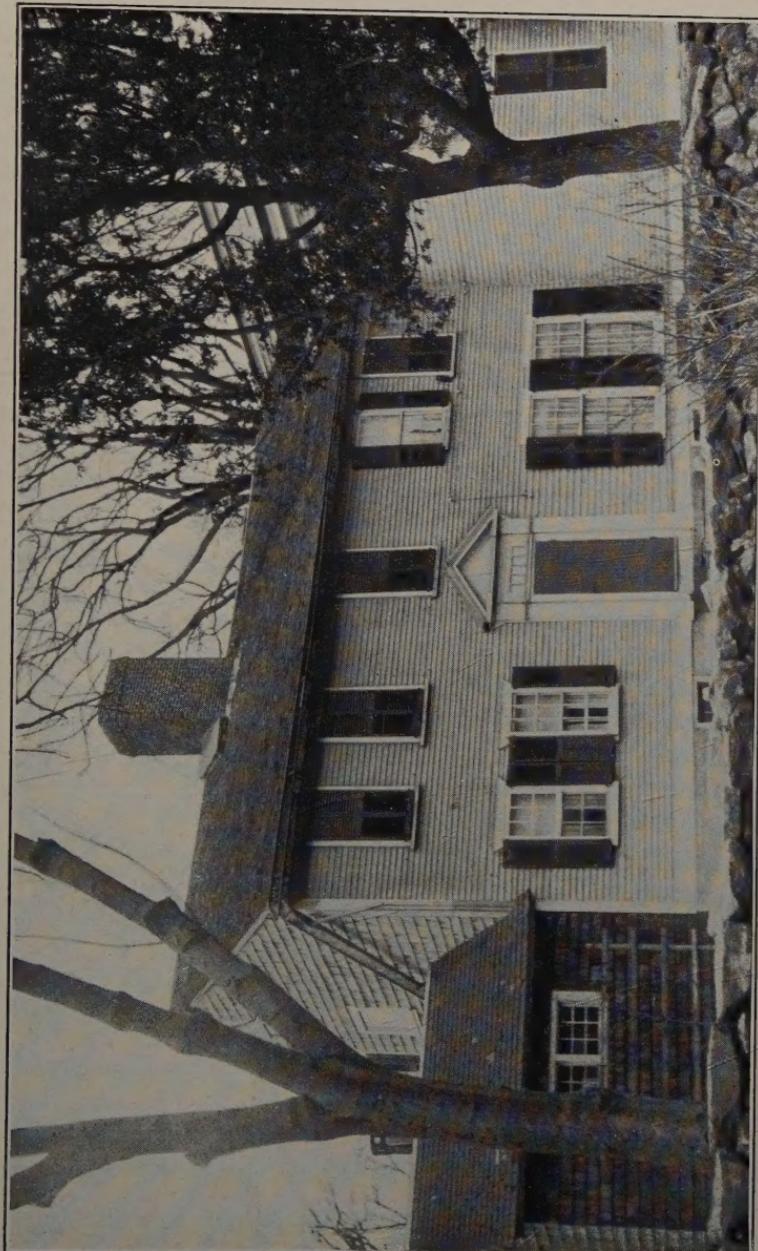
which he incurred in its construction, as shown in the following account due from him to one Daniel Wrightman and dated 1775⁴:

"to carting a Load of bords from newtown	10-0-0
to making 18 dores at 5 pt	90-0-0
to 23 winder frames @ 5 p	115-0-0
to 488 Squares of Sashes @ 4-6	109-16-0
to Carting winders and Dores to Littlerest	12-0-0
	—
	336-16-0
	—
Lawfull	12-12-7
to 108 Days work for meself at 3-6	18-18-0
to 111 Days work for same at 2-6	13-17-6"

This account also exemplifies the question of the rate of depreciation of the paper bills of credit issued by the colonies, a question which caused great perplexities to the merchants, the Assemblies and the Courts.

While this house was building, the Revolution came, and in those stirring days in the community, Joseph Perkin's knowledge of ordnance brought to him many duties. On December 5, 1775, at a meeting of the Town Council of South Kingstown, it was voted that: "Joseph Perkins Repair unto New York immediately and Purchase at ye Expense & for the Use of this Town one hundred good Firearms that will carry not less than three Quarters of an Ounce Ball upon the Best Terms he can and he be allowed five shillings per day And a horse & his expense fore so long as he shall necessaryly be employed in said Business and that he procure said Arms to be brought to this Town as soon as possible at the Expense of sd Town."⁵ Perkins, however, was to be deprived of this journey; for the Council at a later meeting, with a decided view towards economy, voted to "write instead." It is possible that the arms were intended for the use of the Kingston Reds, in which Perkins served for one year (1781) with the commission of Ensign.⁶

On June 16, 1776, Joseph Perkins was married by the Rev. Dr. Torrey to Mary Gardiner, daughter of Caleb and Isabel



The House of Joseph Perkins

(Shearman) Gardiner⁷, whose home was a short distance from Little Rest and in whose father's swamp Samuel Casey hid his dies for counterfeiting when the pursuit became too hot. Mary Perkins was later to become the wife of Elisha Reynolds Potter, Senior. There were no children by either marriage.

Perkins died at Little Rest in September, 1789, at the age of forty years⁸. His will contains the provision that all who owed him ten shillings or less should be released from the debt, that each of his apprentices should receive sum of one hundred dollars and that his slave should be freed⁹.

To whom Perkins was apprenticed, may only be conjectured from the curious fact that one of his day books had bound into its cover a portion of an old copy book, written and signed by Mary Casey, the daughter of Samuel Casey, the silversmith, whose name was also written on the cover. Even if this may be taken as evidence that Perkins learned his trade under such an excellent master, it soon became apparent that he neglected the opportunity thus afforded him and subordinated the occupation of a silversmith to that of a general merchant and gunsmith and, in fact, became ready to do any work or to sell anything that by chance came to his hands.

From a receipt for tools, either purchased or borrowed, it would appear that he set up business for himself during the latter months of the year 1770, which date is further substantiated by entries in the ledger. The earliest day book preserved commences on May 16, 1771. It is not known where his first work shop was located, but it is probable that he rented a place in Little Rest, removing to his new house upon its completion. Here he began a general business, limiting his silverware mainly to spoons and shoe and knee buckles and with the exception of the silver plate, as shown in the page from his ledger, and of one pepper castor, the only piece of hollow ware mentioned among his papers, and which cannot be positively attributed to him, no other examples of his work have been traced.

Perkins not only sold the silver at his shop, but entrusted it to others, to be sold upon a commission of seven per cent. On June 22, 1786, he gave to Hannah Potter a large assortment

Apr. 3 Elisabeth Rose D.

To 1 Silver Plate w. & Do. £ 5 8 2 10 3.

2 10 3

May 28
774.

Immanuel Cope D.

May 1	To Monday a Lock - - - - -	0	1	0
Aug. 1	To 1 gold-ring - - - - -	0	9	0
Sept. 1	To Monday a Lock - - - - -	0	0	3
Oct. 1	To Monday a Porringor - - - - -	0	0	3
Nov. 1	To Monday a Cawkin - - - - -	0	0	4
Dec. 1	To Monday a Cup - - - - -	0	00	4
1775	To minding a stone Batter - - - - -	0	00	6
Jan. 17	To 1 Ht Wine - - - - -	0	1	6
1776	To 1 Large Brass Clock Lent Yew-a-ja	-	3	0
January 4	To Cope - - - - -	0	10	0
February 4	To mon. g a P. Snuffers - - - - -	-	-	9
April 14	To Cope - - - - - By His account	1	6	11
	Balancce in full	0	16	2 1/4

1782
Nov 1 To sundrys accts & Drawn off not Post'd 1 1 6

£ 2 3 1 1/4

of buckles and buttons to the value of eighteen pounds together "with one Glass Case if not sold to Be Returned." On June 8, 1789, nearly three years later, the said Hannah Potter wrote the following letter to Perkins:¹⁰

"Albany june the 8 1789

Mr Perkins

Sir believe you will think I meant to show you a trick about yr Buckles and Buttons in coming away and not informing you I was a coming wrote a letter to Send you before I come away but it missed going by the post and I throgh mistake Brought the letter with me I had Sold about 10 dollars worth of them before I came away as we keep a Shop here Thought they would likely Sell here and that would be an advantage to me and you too they would sell in the fall to the country people they tell when they come in I have Sold one pair Since I have been here which is But a fortnight they are too old fashioned for the people in town Would send you the pay for what I sold at Stonington But I had considerable of money due to me there which I could not get till winter then I shall be down and will pay you for what I have Sold and what I can Sell between this and winter write me . . . if they are not all Sold when I come down if I must bring the remainder with me or No am with respect

Yr Hbl Servt
Hannah Potter"

Even in those far off, leisurely times such business methods could hardly afford great profit. In his will Perkins bequeaths to Stephen Pearce "the buttons and buckles he now has," evidently resulting from a similar transaction.

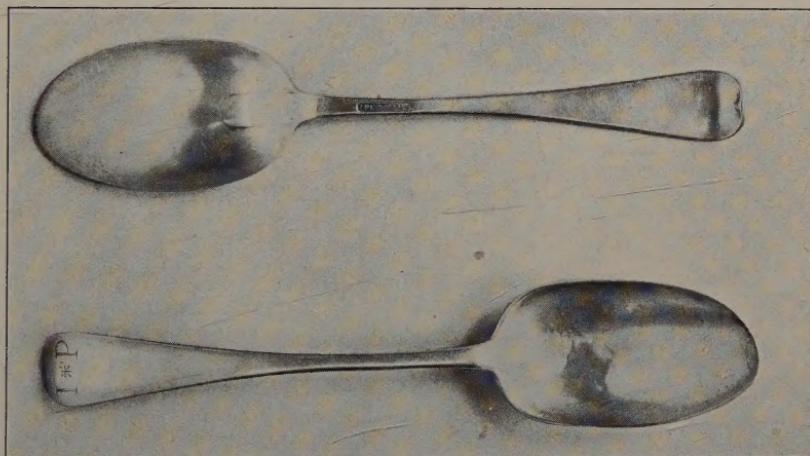
The spoons, which are reproduced in this paper, are the only existing pieces of Perkins' silver that have come to the author's attention, although there must be other examples of his work still extant.

SPOONS. Bowl with long drop; rounded, up curved tip with slight ridge. L. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Inscription: E*G (shaded capitals) and 1772.

Mark: J: PERKINS, (capitals), in rectangle, on reverse of handle.

These spoons, a set of six, originally belonged to Experience Gardiner, daughter of Caleb Gardiner who married Pardon Mawney in June, 1772. They are the property of the author.



Spoons by Joseph Perkins

SPOONS. Ovoid bowl with long drop; handle with rounded, down curved tip. L. 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

Inscription: I*P, (crude shaded capitals) on face of tip.

Mark: J: PERKINS, (capitals), in rectangle, on reverse of handle.

These spoons would appear to have been the property of Joseph Perkins, himself. Now in the author's collection.

¹Caroline E. Robinson, *The Gardiners of Narragansett*, p. 93, and J. N. Arnold, *Vital Records of Rhode Island*, Vol. 5, p. 52. He was probably born in Little Rest. One Abraham Perkins, Blacksmith, removed

from Beverly, Mass., and purchased a lot of land from John More in the village of Little Rest in the year 1714. *Land Evidence of South Kingstown, Extracts, Book 3.* The lot was situated on the south east corner of the four corners in the village. The house is shown on a plat by James Helme dated 1727.

²Original deed among the Potter papers. Recorded in the *Land Evidence of South Kingstown, Book 7*, pp. 254-255.

³This house still stands and is now the ell of the "Hawthorne House" owned by Miss Jane Coddington Hagadorné.

⁴Original in the Potter papers. "Newtown" is the present day Wickford.

⁵*Town Meeting Records of South Kingstown*, p. 387.

⁶Joseph Jencks Smith. *Civil and Military Lists of Rhode Island*, Vol. I, p. 407.

⁷William Davis Miller, *Dr. Joseph Torrey and His Record Book of Marriages*, R. I. Historical Society, 1925, p. 22. Mary Perkins married E. R. Potter, November 7, 1790, and died March 7, 1809.

⁸*Providence Gazette*, September 19, 1789.

⁹*Probate Records of South Kingstown*, Book 6, p. 215. His apprentices were: Warren Gardiner, his wife's nephew, Dyre Stanton, and Peleg Weeden. Weeden subsequently carried on the trade of silversmith in North Kingstown. There is a receipt from Stanton to the executrix (Mary Perkins) for seventy-five Spanish silver milled dollars in full for a legacy "given me by the said Joseph Perkins."

¹⁰This letter, together with the receipt and books, ledger, etc., are among the Potter papers.



Joseph Perkins' Mark



Castor by Nathaniel Helme.
(Courtesy of Miss Elizabeth S. Gilbert)

Nathaniel Helme, Silversmith

By WILLIAM DAVIS MILLER

While Samuel Casey stands as the undisputed master silversmith of South Kingstown, and in fact of the whole of the old King's County, it was simply by the chance of fate that he did not have a serious rival; for the death of Nathaniel Helme, at an early age of twenty-eight, cut short a career that was

full of promise, as may well be judged by the few pieces of his work which are still extant.

He was born in South Kingstown on December 24, 1761¹, the youngest son of Judge James Helme of Tower Hill, who was for many years Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Colony of Rhode Island. His mother was Esther Powell, granddaughter of Gabriel Bernon, one of the original French settlers of North Kingstown.² Coming from this intellectual and wealthy family, Nathaniel Helme, with the advantage of an excellent education, had opportunities that were lacking to the other local silversmiths and to which was apparently added a natural facility in workmanship and design.

Concerning his apprenticeship there is no record, and in fact the absence of information and the scarcity of his work has caused him either to be overlooked or simply listed as "— Helme" in the authorities on silver. The Walpole Society³ list mentions him in this manner and the same list also gives his mark as HELME, capitals in a wedge. The castor shown in the accompanying illustration is marked : "HELME," capitals in a rectangle, and below, "N" and "H" in separate squares. It is probable that all these marks were used. As a matter of fact it was not until the latter mark (N H) was found that accurate evidence could be traced as to which of the numerous Helmes of North or South Kingstown was the silversmith. None of that family designated themselves by that title, Nathaniel Helme styling himself "Gentleman" in the only deed found relative to him.

There is no conclusive proof that he worked in Little Rest other than the facts that his brother James resided⁴ there and that at that date the town had usurped the supremacy from Tower Hill, until 1752 the county seat. It is, however, certain that he worked nearby and in the township of South Kingstown, as has been stated.

Nathaniel Helme died in South Kingstown on November 19, 1789⁵, and the inventory⁶ of his estate contains ample evidence of the extent of his interest in his chosen occupation. The following extracts contain a greater range, and number, of tools

than any other such list in the records of North and South Kingstown:

- "40½ Pewter Patterns
- 29 Spoon Leads & other Lead
- 9 pr. brass flasks or Goldsmiths Cast'g forms
- 1 pr wooded Cast'g Screws 1 Lamp & 2 blow Pipes
- 1 Box with Handle on the Top Containing a Number of Clock and Watch Tools
- 1 Wood Stand or rack with a Number of Old Files & Engravers
- 1 Gold Smiths Skillet & 2 Ingot Moulds
- 10 Gold smiths Hammer 1 Soup Spoon punch & 1 Square bottom Tumbler punch
- 1 Tin Gold Pan
- 1 Box Containing Spoon & button punches
- 1 Button Stamp
- 2 Drawing Irons some large plate Tools
- 3 pr Gold Smith Tongs
Old Steel Chaps & Tongues
- 1 black Lead pot & abt 1 doz crucibles
- 1 round Box of Buckle Tools
- 1 pr Gold Smiths Bellows & frame for do
- 1 Gold smiths Forging Anvil
- 1 Book Cyphers
- 1 Hand Laith & Blocks
- 1 old Tin Box Jewellers & Beed Tools"

This inventory was made by John Waite, also a silversmith, and Samuel Helme, brother of Nathaniel, and was signed by them.

The description of the castor illustrated in this paper is as follows:

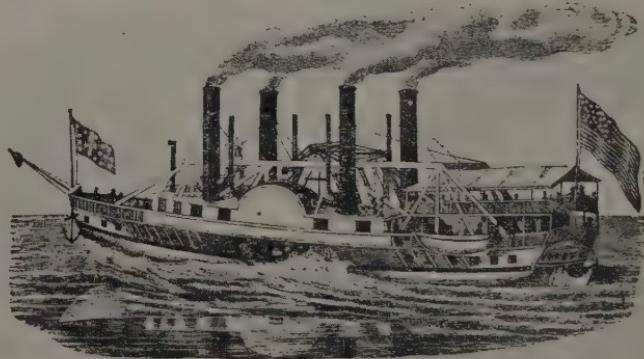
CASTOR. Vase shaped with high dome; lid pierced and decorated with oak leaves and latticed design; flame finial; spreading foot. H. 5½ in.

M

Inscription: P * E (block letters) and date "1772" on base.

Mark: HELME, (capitals), in rectangle, and N and H, in separate rectangles, on base.

ELECTION !



THE STEAMER **IOLAS.**

Capt. B. F. WOOLSEY,

Will leave Providence for Newport, on MONDAY afternoon, May 6th, at 3 o'clock, and leave Newport at 5 1-2 for Providence.

On TUESDAY (ELECTION DAY,) leave Providence at 7 o'clock, a. m. and leave Newport, 4 o'clock, in the afternoon.

On Wednesday will resume her regular trips.

Fare [redacted]

Providence, May 4, 1844.

Courtesy of Newport Historical Society

This castor was the property of Pardon and Experience (Gardiner) Mawney who were married in June, 1772. It is obvious that the date "1772" was not the year that the castor was purchased as Helme was at that time but eleven years of age. There are many instances where silver has been predicated in celebration of a past anniversary or marriage. It is at present the property of Miss Elizabeth S. Gilbert of Brooklyn, N. Y., through whose courtesy it is reproduced.

¹J. N. Arnold, *Vital Records of Rhode Island*, Vol. V, page 37. Nathaniel Helme was often known as Nathaniel Helme, Junior, to distinguish him from his uncle.

²Elisha R. Potter, *Memoir Concerning the French Settlements and French Settlers in the Colony of Rhode Island*, Providence, 1879, page 83.

³Hollis French, *A List of Early American Silversmiths and Their Marks*, The Walpole Society, 1917, page 61.

⁴This house was built by James Helme, Jr., during the third quarter of the Eighteenth Century. It was in this house that Samuel Casey, according to tradition, had his shop in his later days.

⁵*Record of Births and Deaths in South Kingstown*, Book 2. Notice in the *Providence Gazette*, November 21, 1789. Helme was Clerk of the Superior Court of Washington County from 1785 until his death.

⁶*Probate Records of South Kingstown*, Book 6, page 223. The inventory also listed a considerable amount of silver and some gold on hand.

Notes

The *Industrial and Commercial Correspondence of Alexander Hamilton*, Chicago, 1928, published under the auspices of the Business Historical Society, contains two documents relating to Rhode Island industries and a portrait of Moses Brown. Unfortunately some one confused Moses Brown of Providence and Moses Brown of Waltham, and by mistake a picture of the latter was used.

The *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* for April 1928 contains an article on the ancestry of Samuel Gorton.

Random Thoughts Regarding Jamestown, a paper read before the Jamestown Historical Society by W. L. Watson, has been printed for distribution to further interest in the observance of the 250th anniversary of the incorporation of the town.

On April 26th the John Thorp Centenary was held in Pawtucket and a bronze tablet in honor of John Thorp was placed on the wall of the Old Slater Mill. A detailed account of the life and work of John Thorp was published in the Textile World of May 5, 1928.



J. Partridge Pinxit

Loss of the Ship *Janson* of Providence, on February 4, 1820
From painting owned by Miss Frances R. Arnold

The Loss of the Ship Janson

Extract of a letter from Captain Benjamin Mayo of the ship *Janson* to her owners in this town, dated Helder, February 6, 1820.

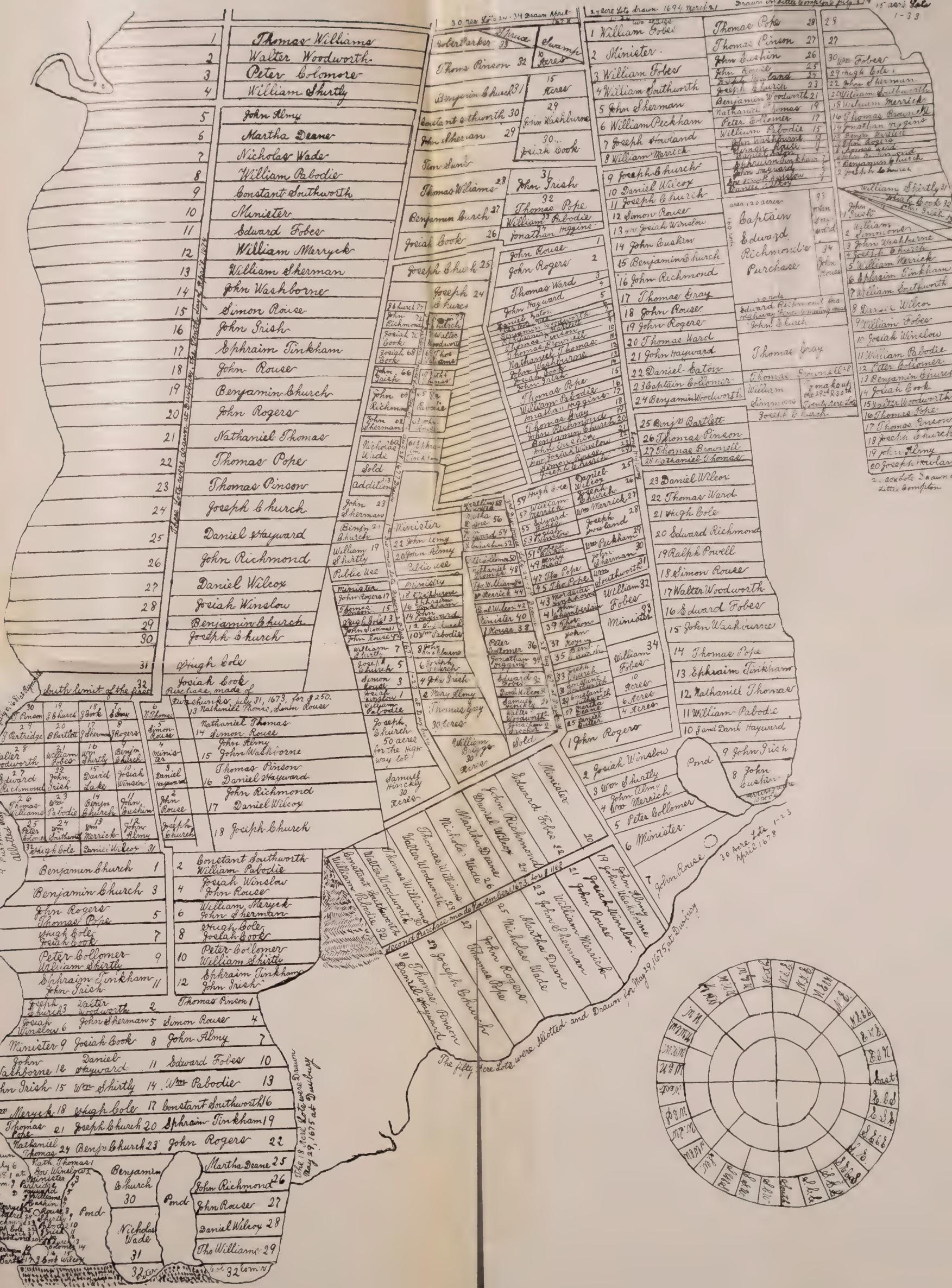
"With deep regret I have to inform you of the loss of the ship *Janson* and cargo. This disastrous event occurred yesterday, within two cables' lengths of New Dieppe. I took a north sea pilot off Dover, having heard of the severity of the winter. I arrived at the entrance of the Texel without any accident. I there got a Texel pilot, and likewise engaged his boat to stay by the ship, and took three more pilots from her to assist in working the ship. The wind being ahead, I lay nearly two days at anchor at the outer buoys. I made two attempts to get in; the first, the wind getting scant, obliged me to put to sea again—the second, she grounded on a shoal. I then got three boats and twenty-five men, and soon got the ship off again. The wind then being fair, I ran up for the New Dieppe, and reached within two cables' length of the entrance, when it suddenly fell calm. The pilot then brought the ship to anchor—at the same time there came a large quantity of drift ice out of the Dieppe. It being calm, there was no possibility of putting the ship to sea again, or running her on shore. I then cut the cable, but to no effect—the ice struck the ship on her starboard bow, and in 20 minutes she went to the bottom, in 15 fathoms of water. We narrowly escaped with our lives. At this time, I had five pilots on board. After I cut, I got the end of a hawser on shore, and as many as fifty men hold of it, endeavouring to haul her on shore—but so sudden was her sinking, that all exertions were of no avail. There is nothing saved but the stern boat."

This account is taken from the *Providence Patriot*, March 15, 1820. A similar account appears in *Providence Gazette*, March 13, 1820.

The *Janson* was owned principally by S. G. Arnold & Co. and Joseph S. Martin, and had arrived in Texel Roads, with a valuable cargo of Coffee and Rice, from Batavia.



Windsor Chair
At One Time Used by the Organist of the
First Baptist Church, Providence
(Recently Presented to the Society by Col. H. Anthony Dyer)



Plat of Little Compton, R. I.

The Plat of Little Compton

This map of Little Compton or Seaconnet was copied by me about 1885 from a map in the possession of the Hon. Philip H. Wilbour of Little Compton.

His map was made about 1850 by Otis Wilbour, the town clerk of Little Compton.

The latter used, as the foundation of his map, a drawing by an unknown surveyor, made probably about 1705.

Otis Wilbour followed exactly all the roads and boundary lines given in the old map, but put in the names of the original proprietors at the time that they first drew lots, whereas the 1705 drawing gives the owners at that time, when some lots had changed hands.

The proprietors were incorporated at Duxbury, Mass., and the first 32 lots acquired by purchase from Awashuncks, the Indian queen, 31 July 1673 for \$250, and drawn for 10 April 1674 at Duxbury. This tract extended from the Tiverton line down the west main road to Taylors Lane, and was one mile wide.

The "Fifty Acre Lots" were next drawn 29 May 1675 at Duxbury, lying partly on the coast in the center of the southern part of the town, and partly north of the "Eighteen Acre Lots."

The "Eighteen Acre Lots" were drawn at the same time as the "Fifty Acre Lots," and included all Seaconnet Neck, as the land between Quoquonset Marsh and the Seaconnet River was called, except the extreme southwest end.

The "House Lots," which were next drawn, 28 Aug. 1677, were small lots at the center of the town intended for dwellings after the manner of old English villages. This plan was not followed out, as the destruction of the Indians in King Philip's War made it safe to reside anywhere.

The "Thirty Acre Lots" were drawn in April 1678, and included the country around Tunipus Pond in the southeastern part of the town and a section in the center of the northern boundary of the town.

The "Three Quarter Mile" purchase was drawn 6 July 1681,

being land just south of the "First Purchase," which had been set aside for the Indian queen, Awashuncks.

At the same time the extreme southwest end of Seacownet was drawn. This land was cleared and allotted in very small portions, so everyone could have a chance to plant Indian corn.

The last three drawings were made much later in 1694, and included all the northeast part of the town, many new names appearing.

HENRY I. RICHMOND

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June, 1928

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Mr. S. Foster Hunt
Mrs. Duncan Hunter
Mr. Louis H. C. Huntoon
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Mr. James H. Hurley
Mr. Richard A. Hurley
Mr. James Hazen Hyde
Mr. William S. Innis
Mr. Norman M. Isham
Mr. Benjamin A. Jackson
Mrs. Donald E. Jackson
Mr. Arthur James
Mr. George A. Jepherson
Mrs. Edward L. Johnson
George F. Johnson, M.D.
Mr. Edward C. Joyce
Mr. Francis B. Keeney
Mrs. Ellsworth L. Kelley
Hon. Charles D. Kimball

- Mrs. Charles D. Kimball
Mr. H. Earle Kimball
Eugene P. King, M.D.
Col. H. Irving King
Mr. Victor H. King
Lucius C. Kingman, M.D.
Miss Amelia S. Knight
Mr. C. Prescott Knight
Mr. C. Prescott Knight, Jr.
Mr. Robert L. Knight
Mrs. Robert L. Knight
Mr. Russell W. Knight
Mrs. Webster Knight
Mrs. Rhea L. M. Knittle
Prof. Harry L. Koopman
Mr. John Krawczuk
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Hon. Thomas Z. Lee
Charles H. Leonard, M.D.
Miss Grace F. Leonard
Miss Anna L. Lestradé
Mr. George H. Lewis
Mr. John B. Lewis
Mr. Joseph W. Lewis
Mr. Ferdinand A. Lincoln
Mrs. Charles Warren Lippitt
Mr. Charles Warren Lippitt
Mrs. Frances Pomeroy Lippitt
Mr. Gorton T. Lippitt
Hon. Henry F. Lippitt
Mr. Arthur B. Lisle
Mrs. Arthur B. Lisle
Mr. Charles W. Littlefield
Mr. Ivory Littlefield
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Mr. Albert E. Lownes
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Mr. Arthur M. McCrillis
Mr. T. F. I. McDonnell
Mrs. T. F. I. McDonnell
Mr. Benjamin M. MacDougall
Mr. Charles B. Mackinney
Mrs. Herbert E. Maine
Mrs. William L. Manchester
Mrs. William H. Mansfield
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Mr. Fletcher S. Mason
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Rev. Charles A. Meader
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Mr. Harold T. Merriman
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Hon. Jesse H. Metcalf
Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf
Mr. Stephen O. Metcalf
Lt. Col. Willis C. Metcalf
Mr. William Davis Miller
Mrs. William Davis Miller
Mr. George L. Miner
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Hon. Addison P. Munroe
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Mr. Raymond E. Ostby
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Mr. G. Richmond Parsons
H. G. Partridge, M.D.
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Mrs. Frederick S. Peck
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Mr. Walter E. Ranger
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Mrs. G. Coburn Sanctuary
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R. Morton Smith, M.D.
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Mr. John H. Wells
Mr. Thomas H. West, Jr.
Mrs. Elizabeth Nicholson White
Mr. Willis H. White
Mrs. Gerald Whitman
Mr. Victor Wilbour
Mr. Frank J. Wilder
Mrs. Elizabeth K. Wilkinson
W. Fred Williams, M.D.
Miss Amey L. Willson
Mr. William A. Wing
Mr. Wilson G. Wing
Mrs. George P. Winship
Hon. John Carter Brown Woods
Mr. Nathan M. Wright
Mr. Lawrence C. Wroth
Mr. William P. Young
Mrs. William P. Young

1695.

THE NEW-ENGLAND
ALMANACK
 For the Year of our Lord CHRIST,
 M DC XC V.
 And of the WORLD,

5 6 4 4:
 Being the third after Leap-year, and of
 the Reign of Their Majesties (which
 began Feb. 13. 1688,9.) the Seventh year.
 Calculated for the Meridian of Boston in
 N.E. 69. deg. 20. min. to the Westward of
 London, and 42. deg. 30. min. North
 Latitude, and may serve for all
 New-England.

To which are added some seasonable
 Cautions against certain Impieties and
 Absurdities in *Tulley's Almanacks*, giv-
 ing a truer Account of what may be
 expected from Astrological *Praedictions*.
 Together with some choice, experimented,
 cheap, easy and parable Receipts, of a
 General Benefit to Country-People. ✓

By C. Lodowick, Physician.

Boston, Printed by B. Green, for S. Phillips, at
 the Brick Shop near the Old Meeting-house. 1695.

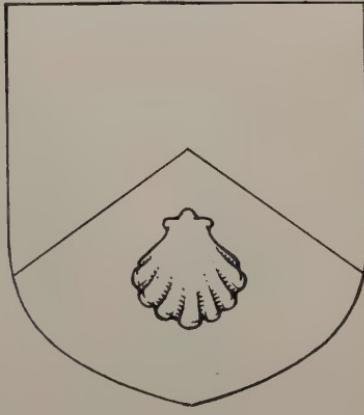
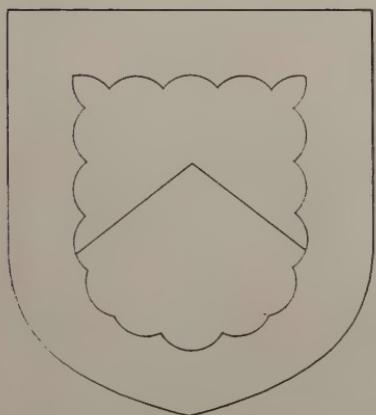
Title-page of Almanac Written by Dr. Christianus
 Lodowick, of Newport, R. I.
 (see vol. XVII, p. 90.)

Courtesy of Goodspeed's Bookshop

Colonial Heraldry

(continued from page 70)

ELLERY



The Ellery arms are somewhat of a puzzle. The earliest use of arms by the American family seems to have been by Benjamin Ellery of Newport, 1669-1746. His seal is illustrated in the *Newport Historical Magazine* (IV:184), but the date of the seal impression is not given. The arms on the seal are "Per chevron and within a border engrailed" Above the shield is a helmet, but no crest is shown.

A note on page 260 of the *Newport Historical Magazine* states that the color of the "lower part," i. e., the field on the Ellery seal, is shown as azure, and that above the shield is a crest instead of a helmet. The crest is described as "a deer on a fillet."

The present locations of these seal impressions are unknown to the writer, so the details can not be verified.

Burke gives no arms under the name Ellery, but gives "Per chevron argent and azure a border engrailed or" for Eldres or Eleris, with the crest "A winged globe proper."

Ellery may be a variant form of the name Eleris, and the seal may have been brought from England by Benjamin's father, William.

Benjamin Ellery's bookplate seems to have been based on the seal, but very poorly executed from an heraldic standpoint. It appears to be intended for "Per chevron argent and azure within a border engrailed or," but as executed appears as "Per chevron, in chief argent a border invected or, in base azure," but with the chevron line cut as a chevron argent, so that the chevron and the field above it are both argent. (*Her. Jour.* 1:182, and *N. H. M.* IV:185, 258). The crest is a stag courant.

Vermont, writing in 1886, (*Amer. Heral.* 109), accidentally reverses the tinctures, blazoning the arms as "Per chevron azure and argent a bordure engrailed or," and shows the stag trippant, but blazons "A stag courant." Crozier follows Vermont, but assigns the arms to William Ellery, the immigrant.

The arms on the tombstone of Abigail, wife of Benjamin Ellery (1742), on the tombstone of Benjamin Ellery (1746), and also on the tombstone of his son William Ellery (1764), all at Newport, are "Per chevron and , in base an escallop." (*Her. Jour.* III:111-113). The colors are not shown, but as these arms appear to be a modification of the earlier Ellery arms, the principal colors were probably retained. In this case these arms probably were "Per chevron argent and azure, in base an escallop or." Of course the escallop may have been "of the first," i. e., argent. It is possible that the Ellerys of Newport thought that the border was "for difference," as in the case of the Cranston arms, and so decided to omit the border, and to use an escallop in base as a mark of difference. Dr. Bowditch suggests that all three stones were erected at the same time in 1764. If this theory is correct, the addition of the escallop to the arms may have been made by Benjamin Ellery of the fourth generation in 1764, instead of by Benjamin Ellery of the second generation in 1742. No crest is shown on the gravestones.

We have dealt so far with the elder branch of the Ellery family in America, the branch that descended from William Ellery and his first wife. Turning now to the younger branch, that descended from William Ellery and his second wife, we find an armorial sampler owned in this family. The sampler, according to the *Heraldic Journal* (IV:42), bears the inscrip-

tion: "Nathaniel and Mary Ellery Anno. Dom. 1745." The arms on the sampler are "Argent, a chevron between three dolphins embowed sable," impaling "Sable on a chevron between three leaves argent as many cross-crosslets of the field," with the crest "An arm erect, the hand grasping a serpent." The *Heraldic Journal* seeks to identify the "Nathaniel and Mary Ellery" of the inscription as the first Nathaniel Ellery and his daughter, Mary, an identification, which is entirely out of harmony with the customs of colonial New England, for such an inscription almost invariably refers to a husband and wife. To be sure there were no Nathaniel and Mary Ellery, husband and wife in 1745, but there were in 1751, and what is more to the point in 1754, for it is very possible that the date 1745 was transposed either by the contributor of the information or by the printer. This theory is greatly strengthened by the arms themselves.

If the *Heraldic Journal's* theory is correct, the arms ought to represent Ellery (the baron's coat) impaling Sargent (the femme's coat), for Mary was apparently the daughter of Nathaniel Ellery by his second wife Anne Sargent, notwithstanding the statement in the *Heraldic Journal* (IV:43) that she was the daughter of his first wife Abigail Norwood, for Abigail Norwood "survived the union only three months," (*Her. Jour.* I:178).

The baron's coat, "Argent, a chevron between three dolphins embowed sable" is not Ellery, but is correctly identified by the *Heraldic Journal* as Sargent, and is evidently for Anne Sargent, Nathaniel's second wife. Why the arms should be transposed, the femme's arms being placed in the place of the baron's arms and vice versa is difficult to understand. Mrs. Bolton in *American Samplers* (p. 408) suggests that the impaled (or femme's) coat may be Norwood. For Mary Ellery to embroider arms, representing her mother's coat impaling the coat of her father's first wife, would seem to be a still more extraordinary procedure.

An accidental transposition of the digits of the date during the process of publication seems much more likely. In this case the Nathaniel and Mary Ellery of the inscription would

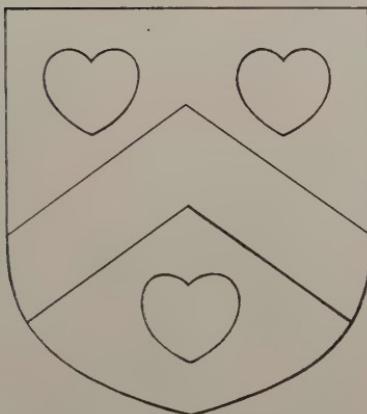
be, as might be expected, husband and wife: Nathaniel Ellery, Junior and his wife Mary Parsons.

Turning to Burke we find the arms of the Parsons of Buckinghamshire given as "Azure on a chevron argent between three oak leaves or, as many crosses gules." Papworth gives these arms as with "crosses couped." The tinctures are not identical, but Dr. Bowditch comments that "You can't tell much about the original colors of embroideries without picking up the threads and seeing their shaded sides." In this case the contributor to the *Heraldic Journal* is our only authority, and he may have made some mistakes. On the other hand *Azure* and *Sable* are often confused by heraldic writers, sometimes the one tincture and sometimes the other being used in blazoning what is apparently the same family coat, as in the cases of Burghdon, Davie, Byfield and others. The tinctures of minor charges, such as the leaves and the crosses, are often changed for difference, although in this case the action of time and light on the metallic threads of silver and gold may have dulled them into a similar silvery appearance, and the red threads of the crosses might easily have darkened, so as to be mistaken for the field tincture. The coat is rather complicated, and is clearly intended for Parsons.

If the impaled coat is Parsons, the impaling (or baron's) coat should be Ellery, but it is not. It is Ellery's mother's coat, for Nathaniel Ellery, Junior, was the son of Nathaniel Ellery Senior's second wife, Anne Sargent.

Apparently the embroiderer wanted to impale Ellery and Parsons, but, being unable to find any Ellery coat, took the baron's mother's coat as the only coat available, thus violating the best heraldic usage, but completing the achievement. The fact that Nathaniel Ellery Junior's father's half-brother, who resided at Newport, R. I., had an Ellery armorial seal might easily have been unknown in the Gloucester, Massachusetts, branch of the family, which descended from Nathaniel Ellery Senior, who was fourteen years younger than his half-brother, Benjamin, being only thirteen years old when Benjamin was married.

FREEBODY



John Freebody, mariner, was of Newport, R. I., as early as 1720, and later became known as Captain Freebody. He died on November 3, 1759, and his grave was marked by an armorial stone. The arms are "A chevron between three hearts," (*Her. Jour.* III:68). A patent of the arms, "Gules a chevron argent between three human hearts or," was issued to John Freebody of Udimore, Sussex in April, 1634, by Richard St. George, Clarenceux, but whether a grant or confirmation is not stated, (*Visit of Sussex*, Harl. Soc. Pub. 53:192).

BRINLEY

Francis Brinley of Newport used an armorial seal on a letter dated September 28, 1686, viz.: "Per pale, a chevron between three escallops" (R. I. H. S. *Harris Papers*, p. 169), and also on a document dated September 4, 1688 (R. I. H. S. *Warner Papers*, I:48).* Francis Brinley seems to have assumed in his later years a border for difference, for the arms "Per pale sable and or, a chevron between three escallops

counterchanged, within a border argent, charged with eight hurts," are credited to him in the Gore Roll, No. 58, under the date of 1719 (*Her. Jour.* I:131), the year of his death. It was not unusual at this period for armigerous persons to make changes in, or additions to, their arms "for difference."

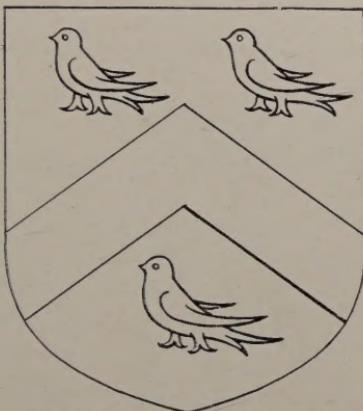


These arms are similar to those given by Burke as "Per pale or and sable, a chevron between three escallops counterchanged" for the Brindesleys (Brindsleys or Brinsleys) of Brinsley in co. Nottingham as by a grant of 1569 and also for the Brindles of Cheshire and Staffordshire, but a different coat is given for Brinley, thus indicating that Francis Brinley's family name was originally Brindesley. The reversal of the tinctures may have been through error or for difference.

This same augmented Brinley coat is given as No. 73 in the Gore Roll (*Her. Jour.* I:135), with the sable half of the shield left uncolored, for Hannah Brinley, 1722, (erroneously called Mary,) widow of Francis (Cf. Austin's *Gen. Dict. of R. I.*, p. 256).

*This seal was used in 1710 by John Greene of Green-end, Newport. (R. I. H. M., V, 68.)

STAFFORD



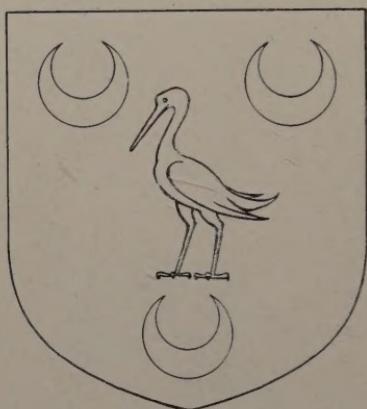
An armorial seal, that appears on fifteen documents in the Warner Papers in the Rhode Island Historical Society library, is "A chevron between three martlets." Its earliest appearance is in 1712, when it is used against the names of Jeremiah Crandall and Priscilla Crandall, each of whom sign with a mark, (I:103). In 1717 it is used in the presence of Joseph Stafford (I:150), and in 1722 Thomas Stafford seals with it (II:6), and again in 1726 (II:41). Edmondson (1780) ascribes the arms "Or, a chevron gules between three martlets sable" to the Staffords of Bootham Hall, Derbyshire, and also gives other Stafford arms as "Or, a chevron gules between three martlets azure," and "Or, a chevron between three martlets sable," which latter appears to have been changed by Burke to "Or, a chevron between three martlets gules."

Impressions of this seal appear against the names of various persons in the Warner Papers, (I:103, 104, 150; II:6, 15, 16, 23, 24, 35, 36, 41, 67-69, and 90).

Thomas and Joseph Stafford were the sons of Thomas Stafford of Warwick, R. I., miller, who came from Warwickshire, England, to Plymouth, Mass., about 1626. Warwickshire is next south of Derbyshire.

There is a reference to the use of the Stafford arms in America on page 3 of Henry M. Benedict's *Genealogy of the Stafford Family*.

JEPSON



Elizabeth, wife of Nathaniel Coggeshall, died at Newport, October 5, 1753, and her grave is marked by an armorial tombstone. The arms are "a stork between three crescents" and there is no crest. She was the daughter of John and Elizabeth Jepson, but the arms are not listed under Jepson or its usual variants by Burke. Guillim in 1724 ascribes the arms "Gules a stork between three crescent argent, beaked and membered or" to the Gibsons of Stavely, Yorks, and states that these arms were confirmed to them January 16, 1655. The legs of the bird on the gravestone are really too short for a stork, but this seems to be accidental, due to the fact that the lower crescent crowded the bird, and the legs of necessity had to be cut short. The name Jepson of this family would seem to have been derived through Jipson and Gipson⁽¹⁾ from Gibson. When a family bearing a surname, of which the derivation is not apparent, use the arms of a family from which the name might be derived, the probability of the inheritance of the arms is very greatly strengthened.

(1)The "G" of Gibson may have been pronounced as "G—soft" like "J," just as the "G" of Gifford was and still is pronounced as "J" in England. The form Gipson is found. (see *Privateering in King George's War*, 1739-1748, p. 32).

